Recommendations of Wadhwa Committee

834. SHRID. RAJA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has a proposal under consideration to overhaul the present Public Distribution System (PDS) in the country on the basis of the Wadhwa Committee recommendations; and

(b) if so, the main recommendations of the Wadhwa Committee and what measures are being taken to revjew the present PDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Central Vigilance Committe(CVC) with Justice D.P. Wadhwa as Chairman was set up by the Supreme Court to look into maladies affecting functioning of Public Distribution System (PDS) and to suggest remedial measures. The Supreme Court's direction to CVC was to conduct this study initially for the TPDS in Delhi, to be followed up on all India basis. The Committee has submitted its report on TPDS in Delhi in August, 2007 to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court in its order dated 10.01.2008 has ordered that similar exercise be undertaken by the *CVC* for the entire country and thereafter the Supreme Court would consider the suggestions of the CVC and shortfalls noticed. Thus the report submitted by CVC so far is only for TPDS in Delhi and does not cover other States. Acopy of summery of recommendations of CVC is given at the Statement *(See* below).

Since the report of CVC submitted so far is for TPDS in Delhi, regarding recommendation of CVC to abolish APL category or limit APL coverage to households having annual income of rupees less than one lakh, Government of Delhi has taken a decision in principle to limit distribution of Specified Food Articles (SFAs) to only those APL card holders, who have their annual family income of less then Rs\ 1 lakh or are not Income Tax payees.

The Central Government has also taken into consideration one suggestion of the CVC to distribute wheat flour to BPL families under TPDS while issuing the revised policy on the subject on 17.01.2008.

Based on earlier evaluation reports, 9-point action plan is under implementation to strengthen TPDS. The TPDS is also being got evaluated concurrently through NCAER and IIPA.

To facilitate use of Right to Information provisions, a revised Citizens' Charter has been issued in July, 2007 for States and UT Governments to implement.

In addition, awareness campaign training programmes for TPDS functionaries, computerization of TPDS and piloting of new technologies like global postioning system, stemping of bags containing TPDS foodgrains, are being taken up to improve functioning of the TPDS.

Statement

Sum and Substance of the Recommendations

(i) Abolishing the APL category and raising the income criteria of BPL up to annual income of Rs. 49,244/- as most of the foodgrain allocated for APL category is diverted in as much as by and large it is not lifted by persons belonging to the APL category. There is every likelihood of outcry against abolition of the APL category